



The Decision We Make on the Rosemont Copper Project will have National Implications

by David F. Briggs

In presenting their arguments to the citizens of southeastern Arizona, Save the Scenic Santa Ritas and others opposed to the Rosemont Copper project have attempted to portray it as a local issue. If I heard it once, I'd heard a million times; "We are not opposed to mining, but we are opposed to this mine. There's no shortage of copper. We can always get the copper from somewhere else. There will be no significant impacts if this project is not developed."

And then there are Resolution Copper's project near Superior, Curis Resources' project at Florence, Northern Dynasty's Pebble project in Alaska and countless others. Like Rosemont Copper, they are also opposed by local groups, whose members benefit from the products made from raw materials derived from mining, but don't want mining projects near their communities.

However, mining projects are not the only types of projects that have been opposed by local groups throughout our nation. Others include electrical transmission lines, oil and gas pipelines, coal-fired power plants, highways, landfills and many others. They are all opposed by groups, whose arguments are similar to those being used against the Rosemont Copper project.

The bottom line is, everywhere there is a proposal to develop a new project in this nation, it encounters opposition like we are now experiencing in our community.

The cumulative impact of the anti-mining foes' strategy of using local issues as justification to deny individual mining projects in America on a case by case basis seriously undermines our ability to supply the products we require to ensure our national security and to maintain and improve our infrastructure and standard of living. It also results in our increased dependence on foreign sources for the goods we consume; increasing our unsustainable trade deficits and leaving our national security needs vulnerable to decisions made by foreign governments.

The proposed Rosemont Copper project is not just a local issue. It is a national issue, which involves land use, water, development of our natural resources, our national economy and how this nation is going to confront the environmental challenges of the 21st century. The decisions we make here will have profound national implications.

If Rosemont Copper is not allowed to develop a modern, state-of-the-art mining operation in a known historical mining district, where can we develop the new mining projects that will be required to supply the needs of future generations of Americans?

If opponents are able to halt Rosemont Copper's efforts to develop this 21st century project, it will place all the future projects that benefit society in jeopardy. Large projects that have been shown to be in compliance with all of the regulatory standards set forth by our laws must be allowed to proceed. Without this assurance, no one will invest the huge amounts of capital required to permit these projects. The risks are simply too great.

The Rosemont Copper project must not be denied an opportunity to proceed. That is a line in the sand that must not be crossed. Our nation's future and that of future generations of Americans will depend on the decisions that are made on this controversial project.

Disclaimer: David F. Briggs is a resident of Pima county and a geologist, who has intermittently worked on the Rosemont Copper project since 2006. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of Rosemont Copper.

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